

Approved at the February 24, 2009 meeting

Flathead County Solid Waste District
Board of Directors Meeting
January 27, 2009 – **5:00 p.m.**
Landfill Office

1. Roll Call

Board Members present: Hank Olson, Chairman; Bill Shaw, Vice Chair; Greg Acton, City of Whitefish; Nancy Askew, Board of Health; John Helton, Member at Large; Alan Ruby, Member at Large and Bill Shaw, City of Columbia Falls. Absent: Dale Lauman, County Commissioner.

District Staff present: Public Works Director Dave Prunty, Operations Manager Jim Chilton and Recording Secretary Deborah Morine.

Attendees: Mike Cullinane SWT Engineering, John Boucher SWT Engineering, Matt O'Connell, Robert Morrow, Peter Gross, Lee Griswold and John Stang Daily Interlake.

2. Introductory Remarks from Chairman

Hank welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Comments from public

Lee Griswold – Ashley Lake Road area. Asked if the public would be able to review the new plans. Hank responded that once the Board decides for sure, the plans would be available.

Peter Gross – McGregor Lake area. Noted that this process has been ongoing for 10 months. He also commented “do we make getting rid of garbage hard or easy?” “You have a moral obligation to the world to make it easy as possible to help us take care of our trash in an appropriate manner.” He stated he is hesitant to use the private hauler as their parent company is based out of state and doesn't like seeing the money leaving the valley. He also noted that some of the trash at the Kila site is generated from “town” and if the site is moved/eliminated you have lost a big chunk of what you have based your numbers on.

Hank thanked Mr. Gross for his comments and stated that it is the Board's objective to scale down the container sites and eliminate the more costly outlying sites.

4. Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes for November 18, 2008

Bill Shaw moved to adopt the November 18, 2008 meeting minutes. Nancy Askew seconded. Motion passed.

5. Action Agenda

a. Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair

Hank Olson asked for nominations of Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

**Bill Shaw nominated Hank Olson to serve as Chairman.
John Helton seconded. Motion passed.**

**Greg Acton nominated Bill Shaw to serves as Vice-Chairman
Nancy Askew seconded. Motion passed.**

Hank Olson continued the meeting.

6. Director's Report

a. West Corridor Container Site Consolidation Project

Staff has met twice with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) since our last meeting in November regarding the potential new container site on State Lands near Ashley Lake Road. Both parties have agreed on a site location and design. TD&H has surveyed the location and prepared a plan view design for the project. The drawing is included in your board packet. DNRC has now closed their comment period on the project with the public. This is part of the Montana Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) they are required to complete. They have provided all the comments they received to us for our review. Many comments centered on the desires of the community to not consolidate the sites. However, the DNRC is interested in comments that pertain to the use of State land for this project and not on whether the consolidation is supported or opposed. The main three comments received by the DNRC were protection of groundwater, preserving the scenic corridor and site setback from the roads. We believe we have or can mitigate these issues such that DNRC staff will provide a positive recommendation to the State Land Commission for our leasing of the ground.

With this information staff is recommending that the Board finalize their decision as to proceed forward or table the project. DNRC would like to have this issue before the State Land Commission in March for a decision on leasing the ground to the District. We would anticipate having a motion on the February agenda authorizing staff to sign the easement with the DNRC and commence final design of the new facility. If the meeting with a group of citizens from the area is to occur we will need to contact them and see if they are still interested in that meeting.

Bill Shaw commented on a concern that was brought up at the last meeting that the highway in the area of the proposed container site is icy in the winter. He wondered when the gentleman who raised the issue retired as the deicing practices have changed over the last 5 years. The State Highway Department uses deicing agents on the highways now that weren't used several years ago which might take care of the issue raised.

The Board discussed conducting one last public meeting on the issue. Dave stated he would like to be able to go to final design by March. Hank stated he didn't want to ask the Board for a vote until after one more public meeting was held. Hank asked Dave to look into procuring the conference room in the Earl Bennett Building sometime before the next Board meeting.

Greg Acton stated there have been many concerns already expressed with the proposed site and would like to formulate responses to address those concerns.

Hank asked Dave to compile a bullet list of issues that have already been mitigated to hand out at the public meeting.

b. District Strategic Plan Preparation

SWT Engineering has been working on the strategic plan that was authorized by the Board. Mike Cullinane and John Boucher from SWT is present at the meeting to update the Board on the progress to date with a power point presentation. This plan is intended to give the District a look beyond our current solid waste operations to the future of solid waste planning in the County. The Board's desire was to look from a 40 year to 100 year life span, or past the current available airspace at the landfill facility. They are analyzing many avenues for the District to consider including expanding the current landfill facility, siting a new landfill in the County, rail or long haul to a regional facility (MT or adjacent states), alternative technologies and increased recycling/source reduction. They will also be analyzing our current container site system and ideas for the future of solid waste removal from residents and businesses within the County.

Mike Cullinane and John Boucher from SWT Engineering addressed the Board and gave a Power Point Presentation with an overview of the proposed strategic plan.

Dave said the goal is to get something structured by the end of the fiscal year in order to make a recommendation to the Board.

c. Alternative Technology – Plasma Gasification

Staff has been approached over the last four or five months by a group working on siting a plasma gasification plant. The company is currently called EnoGy, LLC and is based out of the tri-cities area in Washington State. They are interested in siting a plant in the Flathead, preferably on District property next to the landfill. We have included an article out of Biomass Magazine for your information. In essence, their technology would produce ethanol out of solid waste. Their representative is interested in discussing their ideas with the Board chair and possibly the Board itself in the near future. This technology is currently unproven but there are some pilot projects in other countries around the world and some coming online in the United States in the near future. Our engineers from SWT will also be able to provide some input for the Board about these alternative technologies.

Dave stated there are no actual production facilities of this type in the United States just pilot projects.

The Board concurred that we are already committed to the Landfill Gas to Energy project and are not interested in this particular technology at this time.

d. Landfill Gas to Energy Project

The landfill gas to energy project is progressing. The engine building is now above ground and the engine was delivered on January 21, 2009. The drilling rig has been working to install the new gas wells. Associated trenching has also occurred to install additional lateral and header pipes. Flathead Electrical Cooperative is still hopeful for an April completion but the snow and cold weather has delayed the project.

e. Refuse Operations

Operations proceeded well for the month. Tonnage/Volumes are shown below:

	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>
Total MSW to landfill	7,836.63	6,719.68
Total Appliances Collected	961	745
Junk Vehicles Collected	14	11
Truck Trips to Landfill	480	463
Refuse tons/trip	7.27	6.07

The District landfilled 14.5% and 17.7% less waste in November and December, 2008 as compared to November and December, 2007 and our refuse trucks hauled 3.3% more and 14.3% less waste comparing the same time frame.

The waste landfilled for calendar year 2008 is down 13.8% as compared to calendar year 2007 and our trucks hauled 8.2% less during the same time frame.

Based upon the reduction in tonnage that the District has seen this past year, our staffing needed to be reduced. We have laid off one of the permanent, full time equipment operator effective January 24, 2009. Fortunately, we had an open truck driving position at the Road Department that this person was qualified for. We will be assessing our tonnage levels as we progress into spring. We usually see a marked increase in April but we do not know how the local economy will react this year.

Staff is also closely monitoring the revenue stream for the District. Our assessment system is relatively secure funding but the gate revenue is very dependent on the economy. So far we are slightly under projections for the first half of the fiscal year. We budgeted \$1.2 million in gate revenue and through December we have received \$586,600, or 48.8% of the projected revenue.

Dave reminded the Board of the special Board meeting on February 3, 2009 regarding a personnel matter.

f. District Financial Statements

Dave reviewed the Financial Statements with the Board.

7. Comments from Board Members

John Helton stated he would not be able to attend the special meeting.

Hank commented on the letter from Paula Peterson (Columbia Falls) who requested there be additional plastic and aluminum recycling containers placed at the Columbia Falls site. Dave stated with the additional cardboard containers at Columbia Falls, the roll-off recycle bin takes longer to fill, so the smaller aluminum and plastic receptacles fill up before the box gets emptied. Dave does not recommend adding any more containers at this time.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.